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The Sketch

No. 2665—Vol. CCV. WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 1946 ONE SHILLING AND SIXPENCE.

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ROYAL COMMAND PERFORMANCE AT THE LONDON PALLADIUM.

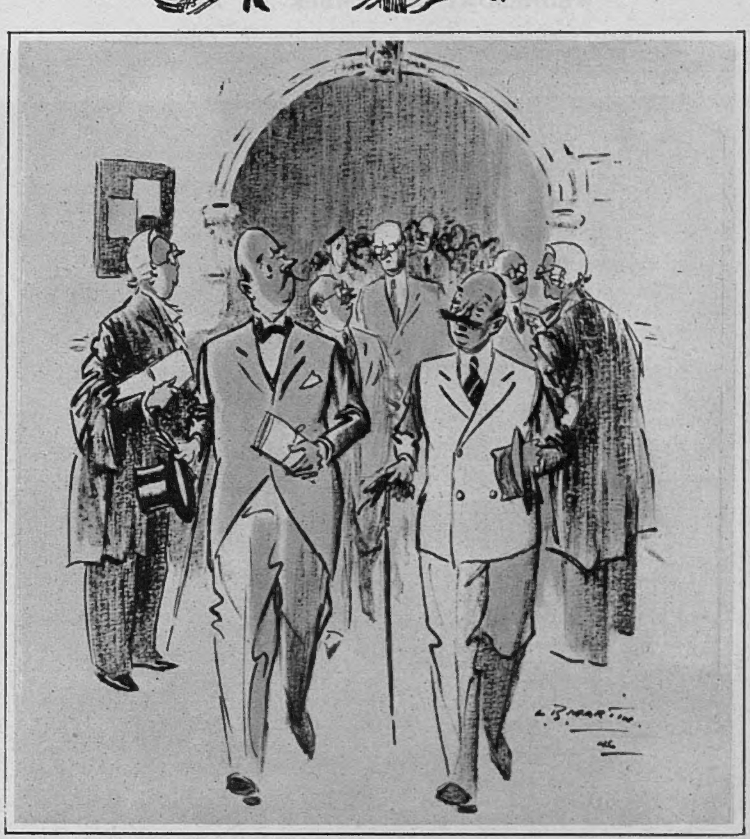
The King and Queen with Princess Elizabeth and Princess Margaret immensely enjoyed the fast-moving Royal Command Variety Performance at the London Palladium last week in aid of the Variety Artistes' Benevolent Fund. After the National Anthem was played—the moment shown in the picture—actors and audience cheered the royal party on their way. Further pictures of the occasion will be found on other pages of this issue.

MOTLEY NOTES.

By ALAN KEMP.

They Are Not Amused.

Those who are familiar with the leading case of *Jarndyce v. Jarndyce*, or who have ever had to dispute a little matter of a trust, settlement or partnership, will know that a giddy, irresponsible gaiety is not the outstanding characteristic of the Chancery Division of the High Court of Justice. Men *have* been known to smile there, but it has usually been the brave smile which hides the breaking heart; and if Bench and Bar have sometimes permitted themselves a light quip about a *cestui que trust* or an incorporeal hereditament, this merry mood has seldom communicated itself to litigants. It is all very well (the litigant has been apt to say) for the undertaker to laugh, but I happen to be the corpse and I do not find this party so funny. And if the rough, rollicking humour of the Temple does not thrive in Lincoln's Inn, so too Sex does not, on the whole, rear its grisly head in the Chancery Division in quite so persistent and deplorable a manner as is to be observed in the Probate, Divorce and Admiralty Division.



"No, perhaps he won't be able to hold his head up again . . . but all the better for his golf, surely?"

DRAWN BY L. B. MARTIN.

Oomph? Humph!

But "stony limits cannot keep love out," and every now and then Sex does bob up and disturb the otherwise chaste atmosphere of Equity. Thus the Chancery has recently been much exercised about the exact connotation of Oomph—what it means, whether it is a vocable or merely a hiccup, whether it is capable of being a trade-mark, and if so, whether it is the sort of trade-mark which is quate nace in polite society. If the Court had asked me, I could have supplied an accurate definition of Oomph without fee, and I could supply it now, but I don't think the Editor would stand for it—so you can keep on guessing. Doubts were even cast on the very philology of the word: it was described as a mere grunt: and the learned Judge doubted whether it fell within the meaning of "language," which is supposed to distinguish man from the brutes that perish. It does; and sometimes it causes one merely to envy the dumb animals their great gift of dumbness.

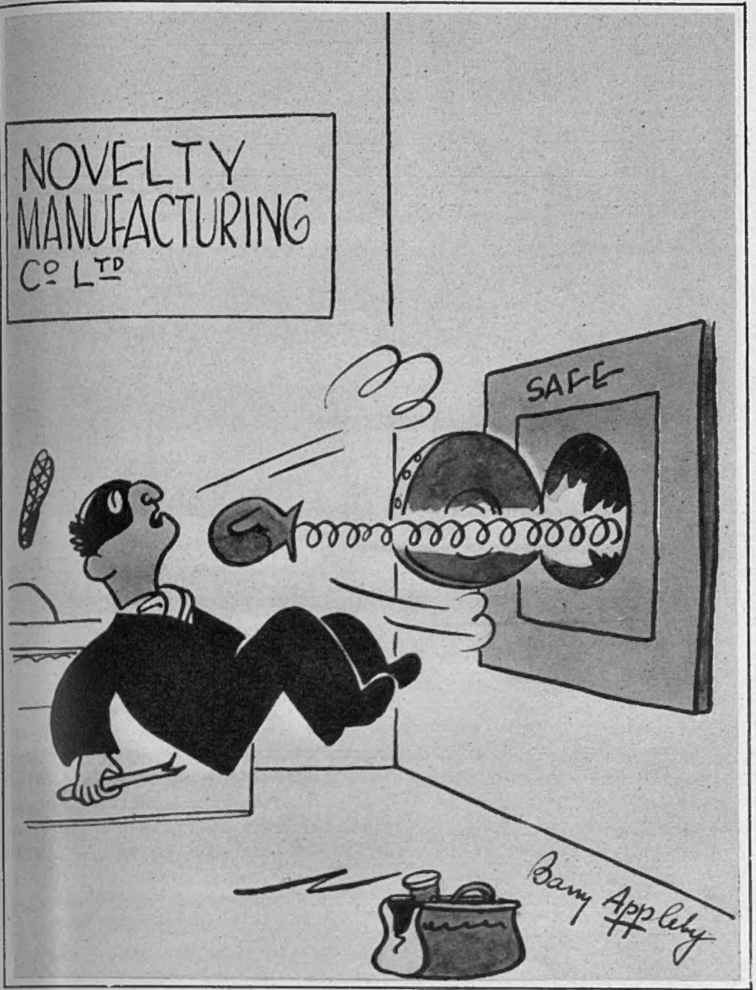
"Really, Miss Mitchelmore, your job is to *sell* hats, not to criticise them!"

DRAWN BY PITTS.

Hot and Cold. We must leave the special pleaders to thread their own ingenious way through the mazes of Oomphery; there are other and more popular manifestations of this ubiquitous influence. There has been some agitation lately about ugly posters. One of them, representing a very lugubrious lady, who is intended to persuade us all of the virtues of the Highway Code, has been the subject of much unfavourable comment. I notice that in many places artistic members of the public have shown a singularly unfeeling attitude towards her misfortunes by adorning her, whenever possible, with a heavy moustache. This sombre tone in posters can always be corrected by the introduction of a little more Oomph. But there are difficulties about that too. I remember an occasion during the war when a very attractive young woman (as I, for one, thought her) on a recruiting poster was severely criticised as exhibiting more Oomph than was thought quite seemly in the Women's Services. Really, people are very difficult to please!

That Song.

Let us, whether oomphwise or otherwise, have more joy (said Sir Stafford, taking another raisin). There is at least one among us, with a portfolio usually considered somewhat funereal, whose life is full of joy. Every time he takes something out of the cash-box, it gives him as much delight as it gives most of us to put something into the cash-box—but then, you see, it isn't his own cash, but yours and mine, and I am sure we should be the last to deny him his simple pleasures. But alas! what gives Dr. Dalton a song in the heart gives the Bishop of Chichester merely a pain in the neck. Meat and poison again! There has been much speculation about that song. I think it must be "Pennies from Heaven," because



DRAWN BY BARRY APPLEBY.

frankly, I do not see where else we are to get enough pennies to keep Dr. Dalton up to concert-pitch. But how delightful it is to see this new mood of jollity in that otherwise forbidding place, the Treasury, to hear music and poetry bursting forth in Whitehall like the nightingale's song, and to see shortages disappearing "like snow"—even if they look more like icebergs at present. It is confidently expected that our lyrical Chancellor will sing his next Budget, or at least recite it in rhymed couplets (perhaps with new family allowances for triplets ?).

Neck or Nothing.

We will all, I am sure, unite in sympathising with the Bishop's affliction. I am not certain whether Bishop's Stiff Neck is an occupational disease, like Clergyman's Sore Throat; but I once knew a dear old vicar who, whenever his neck went creaky—which was rather often—always observed that he belonged to "a froward and a stiff-neckèd generation." This was daring of him, because he evidently thought it was getting rather near blasphemy, and he said it like a naughty boy. All of us, lay or cleric, who have ever suffered from pains in the neck, can testify that they are no joke, though they are always treated as a joke. Neither is that kindred complaint, lumbago, a joke, and it was therefore with indignant astonishment that I saw the other day that a magistrate described lumbago as "trivial." Your worship, have you ever *had* it ? I hope not, but it will serve you right if you get seven days of it without the option !

How 's Tricks ?

Reverting to songs in the heart or elsewhere, I see with alarm that unpardonable liberties are being taken with one very popular song—or, rather, anthem. We are no longer going to be allowed to scatter our enemies and put spokes in their wheels and spanners in their works. This is deplorable, because

Confound their politics,
Frustrate their knavish tricks

is probably the worst rhyme in the English language and ought to be preserved as a literary curiosity. Besides, why this sudden mealy-mouthed mawkishness ? Don't their politics deserve to be confounded—well, I mean, just *look* at them !—or is that pious wish to be reserved for domestic politics ? And aren't their tricks knavish and in every way worthy of frustration ? Occasionally, perhaps, those who differ from us in international politics are fools rather than knaves, but nine times out of ten they are obviously knavish. That is an elementary historical fact. Therefore, let us have the courage of our convictions and tell them where they get off ! We are getting too soft, that 's the trouble. Ask Mr. Molotov.

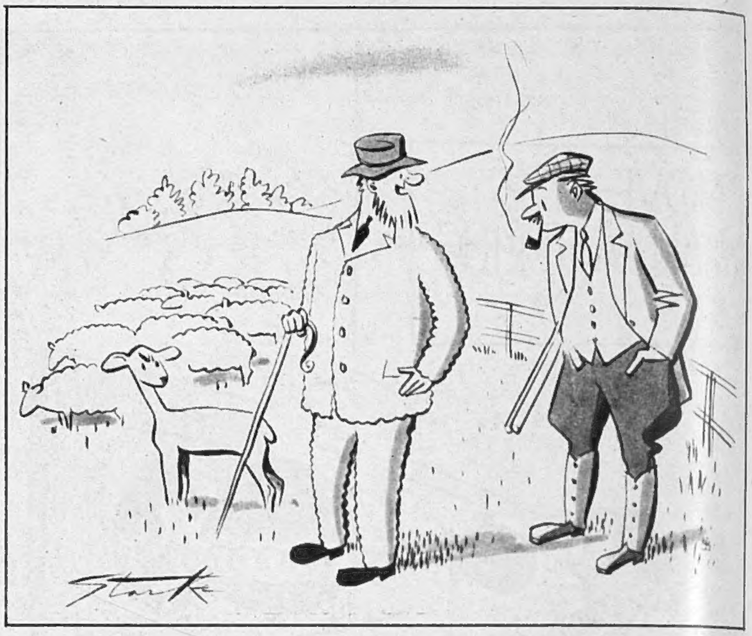
Mobled Queen.

This Bowdlerised anthem reminds me of a certain Royal Personage—not a human being, however, but a ship. I never thought I could tire of the name Queen Elizabeth, because it is a name which (with humble duty) I hold in the highest honour, whether in the sixteenth or the twentieth century. But in its maritime and inanimate connotation, I confess I am just a *leetle* tired of it. It is admirable that this noble ship should once again be ploughing the seas of peace, but, frankly, I do not wish to accompany her, in print or on the air, all the way from Southampton to New York, especially as it is a little tantalising to be told of all the full-and-plenty which the passengers are getting when it is all I can do to get a dollop of dried-egg omelette. I wish the *Queen Elizabeth* the best of luck, for she is a marvellous handiwork of man, but, so far as I am concerned, she can now pursue her ways in peace and with a little less ballyhoo.

[*Continued overleaf.*

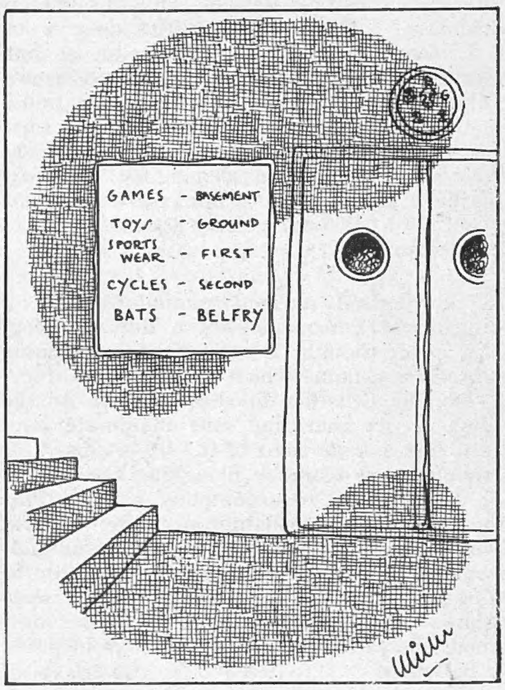
DRAWN BY BEAR.

Figures of Fun. On the other hand, I readily confess that there are many items of news far less entertaining than the exploits of the *Queen Elizabeth*. For example, figures. The papers nowadays are full of figures—and I don't mean merely the fashion columns. If anything is calculated to aggravate the widespread cynicism about statistics, it is the sort of figures which are quoted every day by politicians of opposing parties. I have read many accounts, from both sides, of the rate of rehousing in this country. I have not the least idea how many houses have, *in fact*, been built, or are being built, and I defy anybody to ascertain with any certainty from the figures which have been hurled about by partisans. Similarly, I find it impossible to say how many calories I am getting (not that I care), what the food consumption of this country really is, whether Europe is really starving and whether more or less bread is being consumed as the result of rationing. Yet there are figures by the yard to prove anything about any of these things. No wonder Pilate made that crack about truth. He must have taken a course in statistics and political economy.



"D' you like it? . . . no coupons!"

DRAWN BY STARKE.



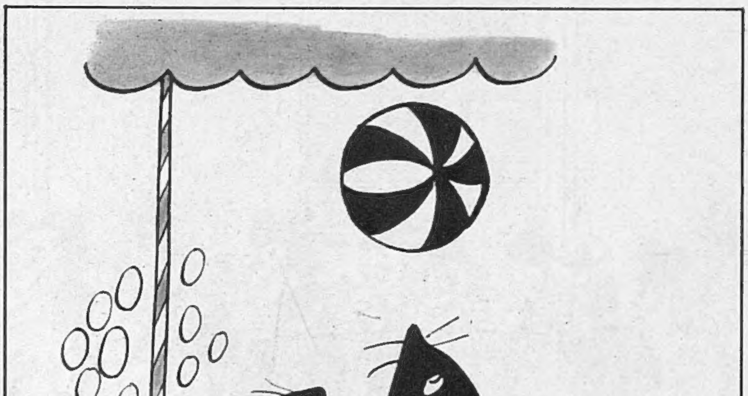
DRAWN BY MILLER.

Mean Temperature. Whatever the figures may be about housing, some interesting suggestions are being made about the fittings of our future homes. One of them is that our dwellings shall be warmed by methods less crude than open fires which send most of the heat-energy up the chimney. It is well known that this subject represents a gulf, as wide as the Atlantic itself, between the two Anglo-Saxon nations. Americans in Britain shrink and shiver, Britons in America boil and burst. I happen to be what is called a "cold mortal," and turn blue on the smallest provocation, but I have suffered severely from near-apoplexy in American buildings, especially hotels, when everybody else seemed to be quite comfortable. But I have also suffered in English houses, especially the larger, country type, with furlongs of tomb-cold passages, and for American visitors these mausoleums must literally make the blood run cold. Is there *no* happy mean in this very important, practical matter? Now, if U.N.O. could only devote its attention to burning questions like this, instead of wrangling about the exact frontiers of places which are of supreme indifference to nine-tenths of humanity, it might be dearer to us all than it is.

"Money 's But a Meddler."

What a myth money is! You call back all the beautiful golden sovereigns and issue little bits of paper instead, and nobody seems to mind. You banish the silver and substitute cupro-nickel, and apparently it does not make the slightest difference to anybody. For the matter of that, vast amounts of what is popularly called "money," and what economists call "wealth," consists simply of entries in books. This cupro-nickel business only shows me (not that I need any convincing) how heathenishly ignorant I am of matters like currency and finance. I distinctly remember, in the history books of my nonage, that whenever the historian had got a down on a king or an emperor, one of the nasty things he always said about him was that "he debased the coinage." I always thought that meant substituting base metal for precious metal, but apparently you can substitute copper and nickel for silver without debasing anything. I give it up!

Wonderful World. An American columnist has summed up human history as "from Adam to Atom." They sure have a snappy way of putting things over there, but let us hope that columnists are not necessarily prophets.—A young man, shaving, carelessly thrust some soap up his nose, sneezed—and dislocated his shoulder. A pinch of snuff, I imagine, would tear him limb from limb.—In the same column of a newspaper I read that two boys were tossed by a cow and a motor-car was charged by a stag. This post-war crime wave is very infectious.—When his wife (petitioner) said that she was sick of hearing about stamps, a philatelist (respondent) took his nice breakfast and threw it at the ceiling. My sympathy is with the wife, on the principle that there is a time and place for everything, and breakfast is not the time for stamps and the ceiling is not the place for breakfast.



"And if you don't play ball they make you into a fur coat."

DRAWN BY BARRY APPLEBY.

AN IDEAL CHRISTMAS PRESENT.

What could one choose better for a friend or relation abroad than a subscription to "THE SKETCH" for six or twelve months. Imagine the great pleasure it would give them to receive this delightful journal fortnightly. A greetings card will be sent with the first copy, if desired. Subscription rates on application to the Publisher, Commonwealth House, 1, New Oxford Street, London, W.C.1

The one-hundred-and-fifty-fourth of our SERIES OF PLATES IN FULL COLOUR *published in this issue of "The Sketch" is by* DAVID WRIGHT.

TO THE COURT OF ST. JAMES'S: NEW SOVIET AMBASSADOR.

M. GEORGI NIKOLAEVICH ZARUBIN, Ambassador of the Soviet to Canada since March 1944, has been appointed Ambassador to Great Britain in succession to M. Gusev. M. Zarubin graduated from Moscow Textile Institute as Engineer Technologist. He has held a number of executive posts in the industry; from 1938-40 was Assistant Commissar-General of the Russian Section of the World Fair in New York City; in 1940 he was engaged in the Soviet Foreign Ministry, first in the Consular Department, and later as head of the American Countries Department. He has been awarded two Orders: the Order of the Red Banner of Labour; and the Order of the Patriotic War, First Class. M. Zarubin is forty-six; is married, and has one son.

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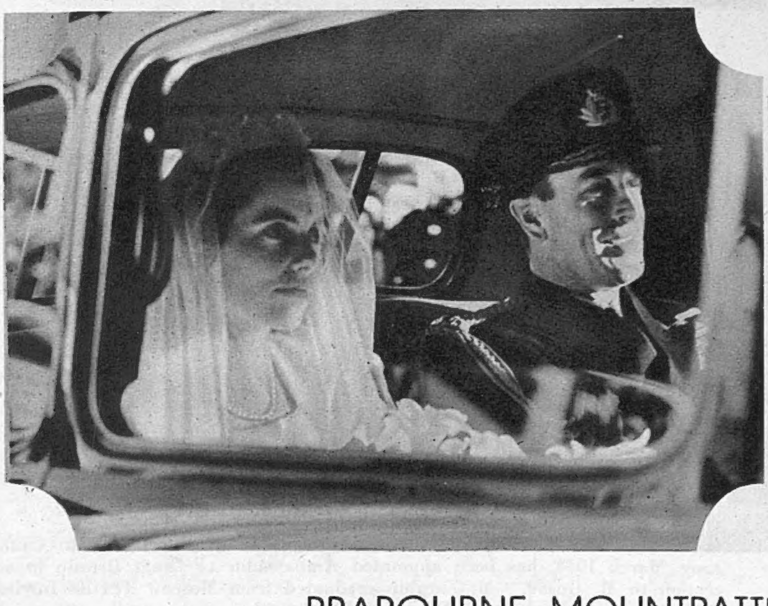


BRABOURNE - MOUNTBATTEN WEDDING STORY FROM A TO Z

This is the full pictorial story of the wedding of Captain Lord Brabourne, Coldstream Guards, to the Hon. Patricia Mountbatten, elder daughter of Lord and Lady Mountbatten. The ceremony, performed by the Archbishop of Canterbury, took place in Romsey Abbey. Their Majesties the King and Queen, the Duchess of Kent and other royal and distinguished guests were present, and Princess Elizabeth, Princess Margaret, Princess Alexandra of Kent and the Hon. Pamela Mountbatten were the bridesmaids. Lord a[nd] Lady Mountbatten went on the Friday morning to the wedding rehears[al] carrying cushions, and Lord Mountbatten himself planned every detail [of] the ceremony, and arranged that old retainers and family friends, such [as] the bride's "nanny," as well as royal and notable guests, should have go[od] places. The bride wore gold brocade with a tulle and heirloom lace ve[il]

REHEARSAL, CEREMONY, RECEPTION, GOING-AWAY.

The bridesmaids were in blue, and the Queen in French grey. After the ceremony the bride and bridegroom drove to Broadlands for the reception at which the King proposed the health of the bride and bridegroom. A reception was also held for estate tenants and employees in the Crosfield Hall, Romsey, and here also the King proposed the health of bride and bridegroom. Lord Brabourne, in reply, said: "It isn't often one gets anything out of a war," an opening which roused laughter, and he then continued, "but during my tour of duty in South-East Asia I picked up many valuable things," indicating, with a side bow, the bride. This made the King and Queen, Lord Mountbatten, and everyone else laugh, as they are seen doing in our picture. Lord and Lady Brabourne left by 'plane for Paris, but had a long wait at the terminus as weather delayed them.

SHOOTING GALLERY

Oh, light the lamps, turn up the wicks,
for those of us who sit
from ten to four on shooting-sticks,
and hardly mention it.

Whose icy lips are sealed by love,
whose pain no man shall know,
the frozen finger in the glove,
the gelid, torpid toe,

the cloud of breath that hesitates
before the watering eyes,
and paralysed, prognosticates
snow from the leaden skies.

The rigor mortis round the knees,
the brain, half comatose,
that marks the beaters in the trees;
the tender, frosted nose,

the cartridge cases whistling by
our pink and deafened ears,
the ghosts of pheasants heaven high,
cartwheeling down the years.

Oh English woman, tell me who,
what other human breed
could fight as gallantly as you,
armoured in Harris tweed?

In butts and swamps, on hill and moors
you bravely take the line,
and in your simple grey velours
the diamond lances shine.

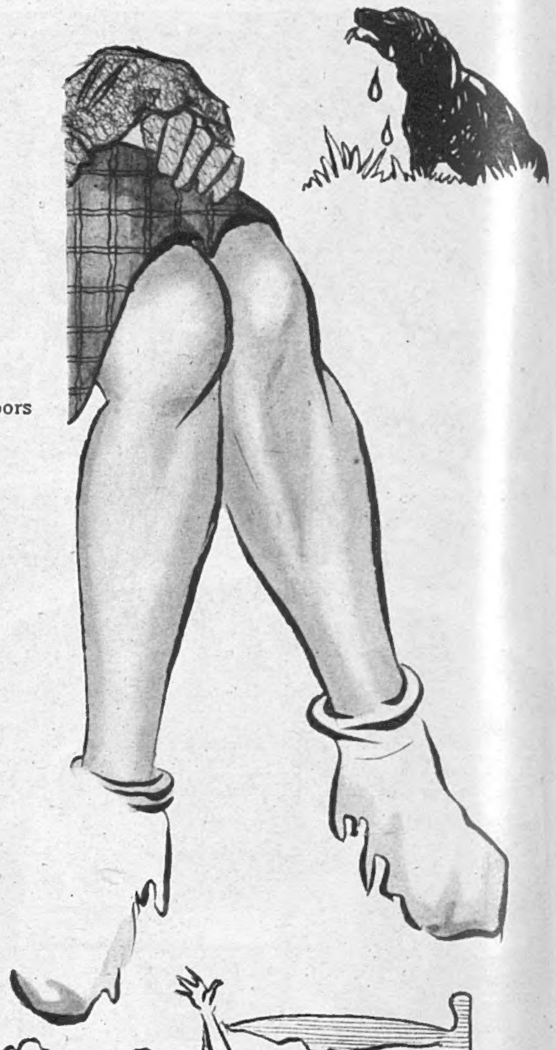
Pinned to the earth the spinsters die,
by mittened bachelors,
catching the sympathetic eye
of whimpering Labradors.

And every married woman can
remember with a curse
the day she vowed to take her man
for better or for worse.

Our smiles flash scarlet o'er the field,
though our behinds be numb;
to slow but certain death we yield,
we gracefully succumb.

But though we surely perish, yet
each cold, bedraggled wretch
dies in the hope that she will get
her photo in *The Sketch*.

VIRGINIA GRAHAM.



LIGHTENING SKETCHES.

WIFE OF THE CHILEAN AMBASSADOR—SEÑORA BIANCHI.

SEÑORA BIANCHI is the wife of Señor don Manuel Bianchi, Chilean Ambassador to the Court of St. James's since 1941, and vice-doyen of the Diplomatic Corps. Her Excellency was born in Venezuela; educated in England; is a niece of the former Venezuelan Ambassador to London, Señor don Jose Rafael Pocaterra. Mme. Bianchi has that *chic* which seems to be a natural gift of Latin-American women, wears her clothes well, and buys most of them in Paris. She collects paintings and porcelain; is fond of playing bridge.

PHOTOGRAPH BY LENARE.

AT THE FIRST ROYAL COMMAND FILM SHOW—

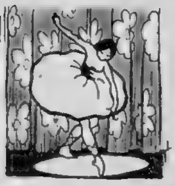
One of the results of the first Royal Command Film Performance on November 1 was the gathering of the biggest crowds London has known since Victory Day. Leicester Square (see bottom row of pictures) was thronged when the King and Queen and the Princesses arrived at the Empire Theatre. Our two central photographs show (upper) the King and Queen and Princess Elizabeth seated with the royal party in the theatre, and (lower) meeting some of the film stars. The Queen is shaking hands with Reginald Gardner, while the King chats with Roger Livesey. The border photographs are "stills" from the Royal Command film, "A Matter of Life and Death"—an all-British production.

—AND AT THE ROYAL COMMAND VARIETY SHOW.

Three days after the Royal Command Film Performance, the King and Queen and the Princesses again visited Theatreland, this time for the Royal Command Variety Performance at the London Palladium on November 4. Crowds again thronged the streets but this time the police (see bottom row of pictures) had an easier task; and the royal cars an easier passage. Our photographs show (upper) Princess Elizabeth and Princess Margaret on arrival at the Palladium, Princess Margaret being greeted by Mr. J. Arthur Rank, and (lower) the King and Queen leaving after the performance, in which more than 200 variety artists some of whom are seen in the border photographs, appeared.

STAGE CAMEOS.

By JOHN RUSSELL.



FEW French plays go well in English. In Paris, where a great writer and an actor of genius have just presented a new translation of "Hamlet," English plays come off excellently: from "Volpone" to "French Without Tears," they never seem to fail. In London there is no corresponding passion for Racine or Labiche; at best, Giraudoux and Sartre creep in under the skirts of Fashion. A recent success at the New Theatre does not belie this, for "Cyrano de Bergerac," as presented by the Old Vic Company, has very little to do with Rostand; and this company's conversational, unaccented style of acting is not very well suited to a piece which dates from the time when players behaved, whether on or off the stage, like actors and actresses, and not like members of a Fabian discussion group. Mr. Tyrone Guthrie does all that a producer can do, however, to overcome this defect of temperament. Not since his "Peer Gynt" in 1944 have we seen such splendid swirling and unswirling of elaborate groups, such an assured handling of a complicated scene. The first act of "Cyrano," with its discreet galleries, three-fold narrative and stage-within-a-stage, is well worthy of a national theatre. Moreover, it has Miss Pamela Brown's orange-girl—a feature greatly missed in subsequent acts; and we have our first sight of Mr. Guinness' de Guiche, which is like nothing so much as a fourth panel for Van Dyck's triple portrait of Charles I. Here and always, Mr. Richardson puts a wonderful coat of gilt on the gingerbread of Mr. Hooker's translation, and it is, of course, he who carries the whole pantomime upon his back. For a pantomime it is—often moving by reason of the very fullness and generosity of Mr. Richardson's playing, and often amusing, where the members of this well-liked company are seen in some new and surprising guise; only occasionally is it tedious or inapt. There are one or two glaring failures—among them a Roxane whose daintiness makes Miss Margaret Lockwood look like an able seaman; but, on the whole, the large romantic canvas is well covered, and there is no question that the play holds and pleases the audience. I hope, all the same, that when it comes to casting "The Alchemist" and "Richard II.," the Old Vic will remember that it has captured two of our best actresses, Miss Brown and Miss Redman, and given them so far very little to do.

Even to balletomanes, "Coppelia" must at times appear rather too simple-minded; the new production by the Sadler's Wells Ballet attempts to disguise its monumental platitudes by a spectacle more suited to Drury Lane than to Covent Garden. Miss Fonteyn and Mr. Rassine can take good care of the dancing, and Mr. Helpmann's buffoonery pleases his admirers, but the laurels of the evening go, I think, to the orchestra pit. Mr. Lambert wonderfully revived the original polish of Delibes' score: can we not persuade Mr. Pomeroy to revive this composer's "L'Omelette à la Follembûche," or his "L'Écossais de Chatou"?

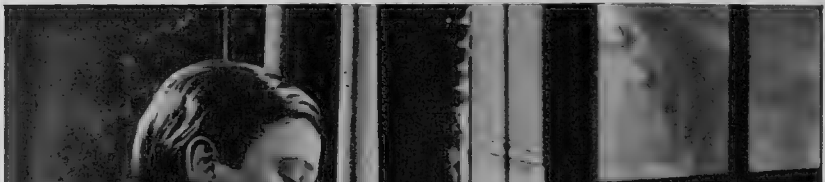
Moira Shearer's interpretation of Swanhilda in "Coppelia" (Covent Garden) has such sparkle and individuality that it emerges as one of the outstanding performances of the season.

On other evenings, the Sadler's Wells Ballet offers some interesting revivals. "The Rake's Progress" remains an admirably vivid and well-mimed play, and Rex Whistler in his settings achieves a delicate compromise between fancy and truth; but in so vast a theatre the action seems to take place as if in a doll's house—and one seen from the far end of a football pitch. Mr. Helpmann's "Hamlet" contains several arresting and Freudian comments upon its Shakespearean theme, but although it is continuously interesting, it offers hardly a moment of real dancing. Mechanical perfection, or something approaching it, is essential to the growth of art; complicated masques like "Hamlet" are not really ballets, but indoor pageants. The point could not be better illustrated than by Mr. Ashton's "Symphonic Variations." In this ballet there is no distraction of plot or scenery; and the six dancers involved are often most compelling when they are quite motionless. Miss Fonteyn's stillness, for example, is a spectacle in itself. With "Jardin des Lilas," this new work of Mr. Ashton's seems to me the best and most original achievement of English ballet, and it is graced by Miss Moira Shearer, who has in a high degree the gifts required of a great dancer. Mr. Angus Morrison and the orchestra perform Franck's music with uncommon dignity, and those who in the past have been disappointed by this company's fondness for coarse magnificence may be sure of finding, in "Symphonic Variations," a memorable enlargement of theatrical art.

At Sadler's Wells itself a cadet company, under Miss Ursula Moreton, is recapturing something of the excitement which attended the first years of Miss de Valois' venture. New works in comic and tragic vein, by Mr. Alan Carter and Mr. Anthony Burke respectively, show a spirit of enterprise which is more important, in the long run, than a precocious sureness of touch.

"The Turn of the Screw," at the Arts Theatre, is a faithful and terrifying reconstruction of Henry James' story. Miss Elspeth March and Miss Louise Hampton never lose the tension of the narrative; for all that the action is often held up to allow for the moving of Miss Fanny Taylor's pretty sets. Children, like dogs and horses, automatically damp the illusion of any stage on which they appear, but in this case they did not distract our attention from the two grown-ups, and the play had much of the grandeur of the author's original conception — a struggle between good and evil for the possession of human souls.

The week's other adaptation, "Vanity Fair," at the Comedy Theatre, flies less high. The fun has its ragged moments, but readers in search of a good play for a family Christmas party will do well to decide on "Vanity Fair."



"The Turn of the Screw" (Arts). The possessed child Miles is expelled from his school; the new Governness is distressed; wants to help him. Miles—Brian Weske; Governess—Elspeth March.

STAGE.

"MUSTS":

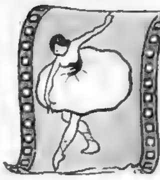
"UNDER THE COUNTER" (Phoenix).
"SWEETEST AND LOWEST" (Ambassadors).
"BIG BEN" (Adelphi).
THE OLD VIC THEATRE (New).

WELL WORTH SEEING:

"HIGH TIME" (Palladium).
"LADY WINDERMERE'S FAN" (Haymarket).
"PERCHANCE TO DREAM" (Hippodrome).
"THE SHOP AT SLY CORNER" (St. Martin's).
"IS YOUR HONEYMOON REALLY NECESSARY?" (Duke of York's).
"FOLLOW THE GIRLS" (His Majesty's).
"WORM'S EYE VIEW" (Whitehall).
"THE GUINEA-PIG" (Criterion).
"SONG OF NORWAY" (Palace).
"FIFTY-FIFTY" (Strand).
"HERE COME THE BOYS" (Saville).
"NO ROOM AT THE INN" (Winter Garden).
"THE WINSLOW BOY" (Lyric).
"GRAND NATIONAL NIGHT" (Apollo).
"CRIME AND PUNISHMENT" (Globe).

CINEMA CAMEOS.

By C. A. LEJEUNE.



MICHAEL POWELL'S new film, "A MATTER OF LIFE AND DEATH" (Empire), is a fantasy about life in the other world, as imagined by a crashed bomber pilot while undergoing a delicate operation on the brain. It is a daring attempt towards the metaphysic, which, in my opinion, fails; as any work must fail which tries to climb to heaven with no other means of afflatus than a giant escalator.

David Niven plays the bomber pilot, who is also a poet, and the very honesty of his performance adds to the unconviction of the piece. For it is quite impossible to credit that this chill, formal, hygienic, black-and-white heaven, with the sexes and professions neatly segregated, could ever have sprung from the mind of this particular poet-airman. Jehovah in clouds and lightning he might have pictured; some sort of flying circus might have suited his prankish humour; but a heaven which is like nothing on earth but a lot of urban district councillors arglebargling in the Public Baths would be quite outside his range of imagination.

It is all a great pity, because the film has its good points. It is brave in idea; the Technicolor of the earthly scenes is pleasant; Kim Hunter, as the airman's American fiancée is charming. But I'm afraid that, in the end, all the charm and all the clever technique doesn't add up to anything much more than a piece of well-intentioned nonsense. "No one," says Montaigne, "is exempt from talking nonsense: the misfortune is to do it solemnly."

"The Strange Woman" (London Pavilion). Time: 1820. Drunken Tim Hager gives his neglected child Jenny a good thrashing for bad behaviour. Tim Hager—Dennis Hoey; Jenny—Hedy Lamarr.

Hedy Lamarr is such an exceedingly beautiful young woman that it is perhaps exigent on our part to ask anything more of "THE STRANGE WOMAN" (London Pavilion) than the mere pleasure of looking at her. If not exigent, it would certainly be vain, for a more preposterous bit of melodramatic nonsense I have not seen for a long time.

The Strange Woman lives in New England in the 1820's, and she is a drunkard's daughter. Warped at a tender age by the sight of her father under the influence of rum, she artlessly tries to drown a little playmate by pushing him into the river and stamping on his head. A few years pass, and she grows into the exquisite Miss Lamarr, speaking English with the prettiest touch of Viennese. By this time she is so accustomed to seeing her father in liquor that she has gone wholly to the bad. She marries a rich old timber merchant and immediately proceeds to vamp his son. In the middle of this proceeding, she catches sight of a man she likes better, a woodsman, who happens to be engaged to her best friend. Hastily arranging that the son shall drown his father and then hang himself, she leaves his body dangling from a beam and triumphantly seduces the woodsman in the adjoining bedroom. The woodsman is a simple man, and marries her. The woodsman's ex-fiancée, too, is simple, and goes on meeting him, in a sisterly kind of way, in a mountain cabin. So there's really nothing left for the Strange Woman to do but try to trample them both to death with a horse-and-buggy. It's just too bad that the axle breaks when she gets to the one really steep bit of the road.

Miss Lamarr, as the Strange Woman, looks a treat. With her hair streaming down her back, a whip in her hand, her lovely lips breathlessly parted, and a seductive white shoulder peeping from her dress, she makes it seem curmudgeonly in the beholder to ask that she might also act. George Sanders plays the woodsman and Louis Hayward the suicidal son. Hillary Brooke, as the ex-fiancée, manages to look a lady, which is about all she is allowed to do.

As a corrective to this odd work, I suggest you drop into Studio One and take a look at "LE BOIS SACRE," in which a company of fine drolls romp wittily and engagingly through a really adult comedy. The "Bois Sacré" is the Ministry of Fine Arts, and the film is a satire on the methods of a poetess of passion to secure herself the Cross of the Legion of Honour. As a piece, it is perhaps a little too talkative, too much preoccupied with the niceties of its stage-origin. But never mind. It has Gaby Morlay in it. And any day that brings us on familiar terms with that accomplished little comedienne must be something of a red-letter day.

"THE KID FROM BROOKLYN" (Leicester Square), a Technicolor musical which can never quite make up its mind whether it is a "vehicle" for the comic talents of Danny Kaye or the pulchritude of Mr. Goldwyn's Young Ladies, is a re-make of an old Harold Lloyd comedy called "The Milky Way." A nervous young milkman, on his evening off, encounters two truculent drunks in a dark alley. As a child, he has learnt by *force majeure* the gentle art of dodging and ducking, and in the present crisis he employs it so well that the drunks knock each other cold on the pavement. Since one of them is the middle-weight champion of the world, and neither of them is in any condition to give a clear account of the engagement, the Fighting Milkman finds himself screamed across the newspaper headlines as a national hero. An enterprising agent takes up the affair as a stunt, arranges a series of faked fights throughout America, and risks his fortune on the milkman's opponent in the final fight for the championship. By a feat of mental contortion almost unparalleled in the history of motion pictures, the script writers manage to foil this dastardly plan.

Your response to "The Kid from Brooklyn" will largely depend upon your taste for Danny Kaye's special brand of humour. My own enthusiasm, high when he is doing his quiet Chaplin stuff, temperate when he embarks on one of his night club imitations, sinks into my shoes every time he begins to grimace, gibber, mop, mow, caper and caterwaul. The close-ups of Mr. Kaye with starting eyes and yellow locks writhing wildly about his head, without which no Danny Kaye picture seems to be complete, affect me with such a powerful distaste that only the firmest act of will-power keeps me in my seat. Fortunately the part of the milkman, a timid type, allows Mr. Kaye to be reasonably quiet for something like three-quarters of the film. And in all the scenes of subdued comedy, when he is fumbling with his boxing-gloves, struggling ineffectually with the paraphernalia of the ring, breaking training to pick a bunch of daisies, he brings to his work the talents of a real clown: faultless timing, minute inflection, good humour, and a kind of pitiful decorum.

"The Kid from Brooklyn" (Leicester Square). Burleigh Sullivan burlesques the Russian manner in his irresistible way. Burleigh Sullivan—Danny Kaye.

STAGE.—*(Continued.)*

"PICK-UP GIRL" (Casino).
"THE POLTERGEIST" (Vaudeville).
"SWEETHEART MINE" (Victoria Palace).
"CLUTTERBUCK" (Wyndham's).
"FOOLS RUSH IN" (Fortune).
"BUT FOR THE GRACE OF GOD" (St. James's).
"MESSAGE FOR MARGARET" (Duchess).
"THE SKIN OF OUR TEETH" (Piccadilly).
"THE SHEPHARD SHOW" (Princes).
"OUR BETTERS" (Playhouse).
"THE NIGHT AND THE LAUGHTER" (Coliseum).
"PICCADILLY HAYRIDE" (Prince of Wales).
"ICE REVUE" (Stoll).

CINEMA.

"BLUE SKIES" (Carlton).
"LA FEMME DU BOULANGER" (Curzon).
"LE GRAND JEU" (Academy).
"A MATTER OF LIFE AND DEATH" (Empire).
"LE BOIS SACRÉ" (Studio One).
"THE STRANGE WOMAN" (London Pavilion).
"THE KID FROM BROOKLYN" (Leicester Square).

While every endeavour is made to keep this list up to date, we cannot hold ourselves responsible for any errors which may occur.

ROYAL GUESTS, ROYAL ATTENDANTS AT THE BUTTER-WERNHER WEDDING.

After her wedding the bride spoke a word or two to her little attendants: Princess Alexandra of Kent, her brother Prince Michael of Kent, and the Hon. Diana Herbert.

When Major David Butter, Scots Guards, and Miss Myra Wernher were married last week at St. Margaret's, Westminster, Queen Mary, Princess Elizabeth, Princess Margaret, and the Duchess of Kent were among many royal and distinguished guests at the wedding. The Dean of Westminster officiated, assisted by the Rev. Charles Smyth; and Captain Ian Calvocoressi was best man. The bridegroom is the son of the late Colonel C. A. J. Butter, and of Mrs. Butter, of Pitlochry, Perthshire; and the bride is the younger daughter of Major-General Sir Harold and Lady Zia Wernher of Thorpe Lubenham, Market Harborough, Leicestershire.

Major and Mrs. Butter after the ceremony at St. Margaret's. The bride's gown was of shell-pink tulle embroid- with silver and a long tulle veil; her bridesmaids wore shell-pink; her page Prince Michael wore the Royal Stewart tartan.

Queen Mary, walking with the bride's father, Major-General Sir Harold Wernher, left the church followed by T.R.H. Princess Elizabeth, the Duchess of Kent, and Princess Margaret.

Admiral Lord Mountbatten of Burma and Lady Mountbatten were with the Earl of Athlone.

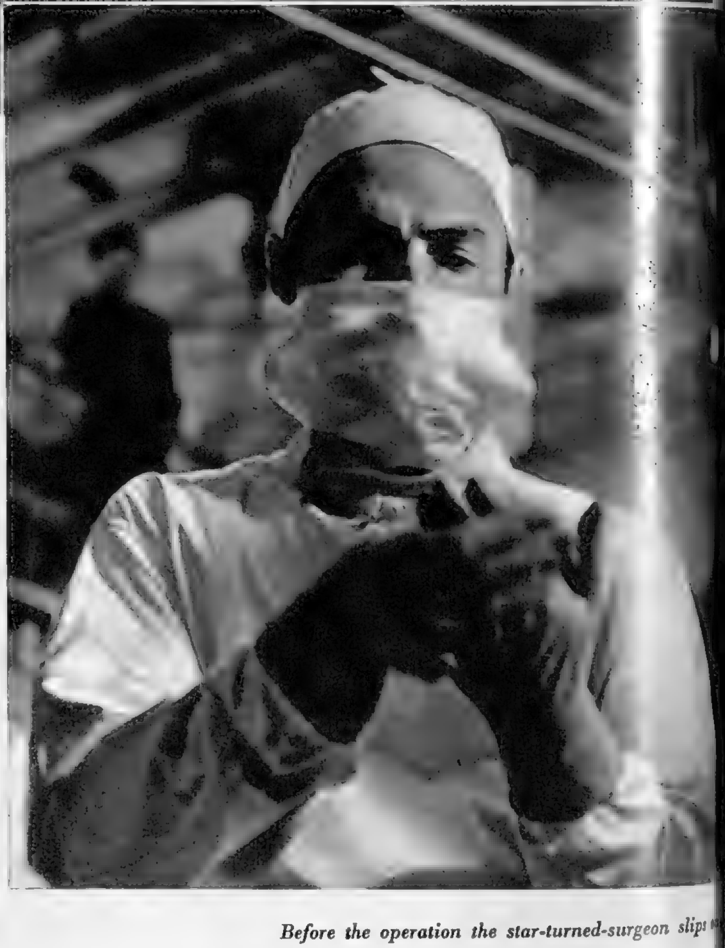
CINEMASTERPIECES—INGRID BERGMAN.

Ingrid Bergman plays a traitor's daughter in the new Alfred Hitchcock film "Notorious" shortly expected in London. Co-starring is Cary Grant. In her last—"The Bells of St. Mary's" she was a realistic Mother Superior. This versatile, intelligent star was born in Stockholm in 1917; married Dr. Peter Lindström in 1937; has one daughter, born 1938. At her earliest she was drawn to acting and the stage; joined the Royal Dramatic Theatre School, Stockholm; attracted the notice of the pundits; and took to the films.

PHOTOGRAPH SPECIALLY TAKEN FOR "THE SKETCH" BY KARSH, OF OTTAWA.

Before shooting begins James Mason as the Specialist tests each one of the many instruments to be used in the sequence; gets the feel of them so as to handle them naturally.

James Mason correctly, methodically bandages the patient's head after the operation, while rehearsing for the actual filming.



Before the operation the star-turned-surgeon slips o

OPERATION SURGEON: JAMES MA

The versatility of a film star must be multi-facetted. Leading statesman is critical; performance must be flawless. The star must live the part; screen in a new Sydney Box production "The Upturned Glass" in which sequences—both brain operations—to his credit. For this he visited a L advice was given throughout; and a doctor who watched declared Mas associated last year as star and producer of that m

N.B. A Coloured plate is inserted in this issue.

As Dr. Michael Joyce the star stands at the patient's head while technical adviser Wilfred Bowman (second from left) shows him how to anæsthetise a patient.

...ir of rubber gloves watched by the nurse.

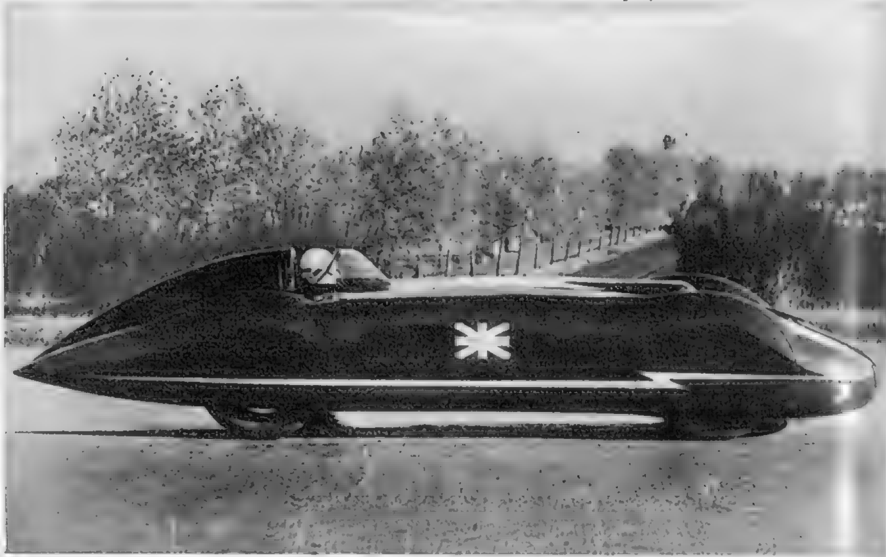
...N IN "THE UPTURNED GLASS."

...film; racing driver or famous musician in another. The public ...ions must be technically correct. James Mason returns to the ...s Dr. Michael Joyce, eminent brain specialist, with two operation ...ospital; witnessed the operations. On the "op" set technical ...ions to be most realistic. James Mason and Sydney Box were ...ssful British picture "The Seventh Veil."

The patient lies unconscious; the surgeon—James Mason—looks across at the technical adviser to know what comes next.

WE TAKE OFF OUR HAT TO——

Australia's "batting machine," Don Bradman, for re-entering the lists against the M.C.C.



COLONEL GOLDIE GARDNER, *for breaking three records, reaching 164·72 m.p.h., to show that Britain owns the fastest small car on earth.*

The makers of this "Triumph" of modelling, for their reproduction of a great carrier.

COLONEL "POPSKI," *for using his very small "Private Army" of 120 soldiers to keep 30,000 Germans on the hop protecting lines of communication.*

ONE of the high lights of Saturday's Lord Mayor's Show was the Royal Naval Section, in which the large scale model of H.M.S. *Triumph*—one of Britain's latest Fleet carriers, was borne by on a float. The model is 45 ft. long, 5 ft. wide; was built by the R.N. Aircraft Repair Yard at Fleetlands. It has range on its flight-deck for four Fireflies, three Seafires, and a Sea Vampire. The picture shows schoolboys having a pre-view of the craft.

COLONEL VLADIMIR PENIAKOV recently arrived in London, gives fresh details of the work and adventures of the heroic, legendary "Popski's Private Army." This tiny raiding force of never more than 120 soldiers kept 30,000 Germans in the Western Desert nervously on the alert and preoccupied protecting their lines of communication. In 1942 "Popski" formed the band; worked from 30 to 200 miles behind the enemy front, with an army of 500,000 surrounding him. With a handful of men he achieved results out of all proportion to the numbers engaged; starting before Wavell's push began with a few Arabs who knew Italian, he sent them into enemy messes acting as waiters . . . they came back with information discussed at meals. Within an hour he had radioed the information into Cairo on his radio set. By 1945 the band was enlarged to forty or fifty men, all British. His men wore uniform without badges or flashes for all their exploits; slept in the open; got their food locally. Once they blew up a dump of 100,000 gallons of petrol; once fifteen of his men captured at Chioggia a German garrison of 800. They took jeeps over the mountains, harried the Germans, disappeared. The adventures of "Popski's Private Army" are endless, hazardous and glorious. In September 1945 it was disbanded. Colonel Peniakov is the Belgian-born son of the Russian engineer. He was awarded the D.S.O. and the M.C., lost a finger in 1943; and his left arm in 1944.

COLONEL GOLDIE GARDNER has proved by his own personal initiative that British automobile engineering is the tops when it comes to record-breaking. In his six-cylinder 750-c.c. supercharged M.G.—the fastest small car in the world—he broke three records—the flying kilometre, the flying mile and the five kilometres, at Ostend on October 30. This streamlined small car now holds the highest speeds in three International categories.

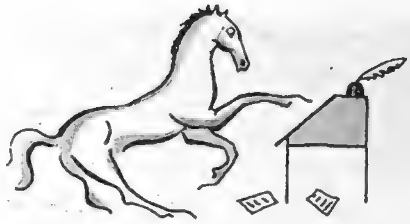
LAST week Don Bradman, brilliant Australian "batting machine," made his first very welcome reappearance in first-class cricket for a long time, batting in the match M.C.C. v. South Australia at Adelaide.

AND WE APPLAUD

BENIAMINO AND RINA GIGLI, for making "La Bohème" quite a family affair.

"La Bohème," at Covent Garden, with the C.M.F. San Carlo Opera Company, was quite *en famille* with famous tenor and father Gigli playing Rodolfo to his daughter Rina's Mimi. Throughout the opera Gigli played up to and encouraged his daughter; pretended she was his sweetheart, on this her London début. It is Gigli's first appearance in London since the war. His daughter was trained by himself and Dino Borgioli.

PHOTOGRAPH BY EDWARD MANDINIAN.



FROM THE HORSE'S MOUTH

When the Editor of *The Sketch* looked over the fence of my paddock a week or two ago, I thought he was going to ask me to write about all those good races I so narrowly failed to win in my younger and, it must be admitted, better days.

I should have enjoyed telling you all about my racing days, probably a great deal more than you would have enjoyed listening to the recital. As I always paid the closest attention to what my trainer told my owner after I was beaten, I could easily convince you that on my best form (at home) I was well above classic standard, and nothing but a succession of the most unheard-of pieces of ill-luck prevented me from going through my career unbeaten.

However, it appeared that the Editor had other views, and so I have agreed, for a consideration (a mere handful of granary sweepings, fortnightly), to give to *The Sketch* readers my opinions upon current racing.

Since I am related in varying degrees to most of the higher-class performers upon the Turf (we are, of course, just too *terribly* in-bred), and have a first-hand knowledge of the trainers' "excuse-book," as I hinted above, I hope to be able to keep you abreast of affairs and to apply the appropriate balm when things do not turn out as you expect.

You have no idea what a time of strain and anxiety these closing weeks of the flat-racing season are for the not-quite-so-swift-running inmates of the various racing stables. Ominous remarks about earning "winter keep" issue from trainers' lips, and these hints conjure up visions of the alternative—appearance at the December Sales and then jumping, or worse (if anything could be!).

And by the time these turgid reflections appear in print there will only be three days at Manchester and one at Lingfield in which sullied reputations can be redeemed!

This year, as usual, quite a few of my Newmarket-trained friends will have to brave the rigours of the North in order to rub shoulders somewhat more than metaphorically with those tough customers from Malton, Wetherby, Middleham, and other northern centres. There is a certain clannishness about North Country racing which makes any winner from Newmarket or the South full value for any stake they may happen to pick up. Such as Delville Wood, Ruscus, Las Vegas and Blueit will therefore be difficult to beat, playing, as it were, on the home ground.

There are three from Newmarket, however, who were pretty sweet on their own chances after several rounds of "tonic water" in our favourite "local" "The Equine Jade." They are Voluntary, Star of Autumn and Wings of Song, and I must admit that the two first-named have persuaded me that they hold the race between them—my own leaning being rather towards Star of Autumn, a very appropriate name for a Manchester November Handicap winner!

Thus we come to the end of another season, and great interest will centre upon the market at the December Sales in just over a fortnight. What we horses want to know is whether our values are going to go down with a bump or not.

You humans seem quite incomprehensible to us—you have lately been bidding eight or nine hundred, and often a thousand or more for ordinary platers after they have won their sellers; yet a two-year-old winner of five races—and a filly at that—scarcely raises a bid at the Houghton Sales!

Certain other winning "lots" (how we resent being described as "Lots"!) were sold for a quarter or fifth of the price of even moderately-bred yearlings in the summer: it makes us wonder whether you buy us as racehorses or *objets d'art*.

However, there is surely no doubt that those of us who are destined for jumping will command good prices, for it looks like being a splendid season "over the sticks." Concerning which I hope to be able to give you the doubtful benefit of my personal experiences of jump-racing as applied to current events "over the obstacles" during the coming season.

The class of horse that goes jumping nowadays is vastly improved from the days of my youth, when any resolute non-trier on the flat was considered a certain winner at the winter game. Though I had a cut at it myself, I admit it was only because, when I was first put over a fence, my shins were so sore from a summer's campaign on the flat that I took very good care not to risk them coming into contact with the obstacle!

Many of my rather roguish friends confided to me that the only reason they ran so much faster "over the sticks" was because they simply had to in order not to die of cold! To me the whole business lacked tone, and I felt thoroughly degraded at having to appear in fog and sleet, rain and hail at such very unfashionable places as Wincanton, Market Rasen, Bogside, and so on. The mud disgusted me, the open ditches appalled me, and my jockey's language even surprised me. But there! I was always more fastidious than these rather under-bred sons of My Prince, Cottage Knight, or Kilcash, and so on, who positively revel in the game.

It will be interesting to see how the various sons of the two former compete this season, especially with so much opposition in the shape of recently-imported horses from France.

We shall have more amateurs riding than last year, and that is all for the good of the game. George Archibald will be a great loss from the ranks of the "pro's," and the many good 'chasers he has ridden will join me in wishing him every success as a trainer.

It will be good to have hurdle racehorses from Newmarket running this season for the first time for many years, and I am also pleased to be able to tell you that Captain "Bobby" Norris has collected a nice team of jumpers at Steane, near Brackley. And that, incidentally, is a stable I *should* like to be in; lots of good grub, I'll bet, for his horses always look so well. It will be surprising if he does not send out some good-class winners—perhaps that handsome chestnut, The Chiseller, will be amongst them.

T.W.N.

GIRLS GOING PACES: FOR HEALTH, SHOWMANSHIP—AND JUST FOR FUN!

KNEES UP, MOTHER BROWN: *Janika, of the new French dancing team, Irane and Janika, demonstrating the result of six months' intensive practice at turning herself into a human catherine wheel.*

IN THE CAUSE OF HEALTH: *A member of a team of Swedish physical training experts who recently visited this country, caught by the camera during a display at Dartford College of Physical Education.*

TO ENTERTAIN THE KING AND QUEEN: *Dixie Ross, American crooner-contortionist, apparently trying to tie herself into a complicated knot while rehearsing for her appearance at the Royal Command Variety Performance.*

FOR SHEER JOIE DE VIVRE: *Full of ozone and the joy of life, Valyne does strenuous somersaults just to please herself. Or did she know our cameraman was snooping around with one of those 1-1000th-of-a-second-exposure cameras?*

THE LITERARY LOUNGER.

By L. P. HARTLEY.

"HOUSE UNDER MARS" is a novel on a well-worn pattern. Mrs. Bayliss ("Win") is in charge of Gladstone Mansions, the property of a Mr. Gordon, who has had it adapted for "flatlets"; there are fourteen of these, and he pays Mrs. Bayliss thirty shillings a week to clean them and keep them in order. Meanwhile he is at the war, into which, after a heart-breaking last leave, Mrs. Bayliss's husband, Jim, is also drawn, leaving her to cope with the tenants, most of them women and several of them no better than they should be.

Miss Vicki Baum in "Grand Hotel" popularised what might be called the "contiguity" novel, the novel in which people's relationships depend on the accident of proximity and not on choice. It has the advantage, to a novelist with the requisite knowledge, that it offers a ready-made cross-section of life; and the disadvantage that it does not lend itself to plot or development or concentration of interest on any individual or group.

Undesirable Tenants. At Gladstone Mansions, as a matter of fact, the tenants belong mostly to one class, and that a poor one; Mrs. Richards, who, besides being sympathetic in every sense of the word, is also morally irreproachable, earns £3 a week. Mrs. Featherstone is a prostitute; Miss Lacey, for all her airs and graces, is little better, and most of the women bring in gentlemen to spend the night and "sleep on the floor" (as one of them not very convincingly explains). This laxity disturbs Mrs. Bayliss, and the noise, rather than the fact, of the love-making causes some of the tenants to complain; but she is kind-hearted and tolerant, and after Jim's departure she, and the reader, begin to take the gradual decline in reputation of Gladstone Mansions as a matter of course. But we are reckoning without Mr. Gordon and a Day of Judgment round the corner. It is this visitation and not, as I once expected, a passionate development in the platonic attachment between Mrs. Bayliss and Mr. Taylor, that gives Miss Hoult her climax.

Satire and Irony. Her presentation of her characters is satiric and sometimes merciless. When they speak they give themselves away, revealing depths of vanity and pettiness and meanness. But her comments on them are ironical and humorous and charged with an unexpressed pity that takes a good deal of the sting out of the satire. Miss Lacey speaking moves our indignation; but Miss Hoult's comments on Miss Lacey make us chuckle, for they belong to the first order of humour. Gladstone Mansions is by no means the most squalid interior she has shown us, for Mr. Gordon had spent a lot of money on doing it up; yet gradually it declines into dinginess, just as its clientèle sinks lower and lower in the moral and, to some extent, in the social scale. Only where Mrs. Richards is concerned—Mrs. Richards, the self-effacing confidante of Mrs. Bayliss—do we get those glimpses of blue sky beyond, those rare and brilliant shafts of moral and spiritual beauty, which show that the author is far from acquiescing in the grim state of affairs of which she seems so tolerant. She waves aside the blitz, disdaining to describe it, and the war itself is hardly more than another aspect of human frailty and folly, separating wives from husbands, encouraging vice, and sending back Jim Bayliss a less amiable human being than he went out. We grow so fond of Mrs. Bayliss, we sympathise so much with her myriad trials, that we forget she is letting the house down; and we feel quite irritated with Mr. Gordon when he suddenly demands an account of her stewardship and expresses himself dissatisfied. . . . Read as a parable, "House Under Mars" is an alarming story. Read as a comedy, a satire on manners and morals, it is a continual feast. The story suffers from a certain monotony of mood, consequent upon having so many characters, many transitory and most, broadly speaking, observed from the same angle; but within its limitations, self-imposed or inherent, Miss Hoult's art can bear comparison with that of almost any living novelist.

A Family Skeleton. "Rogue Elephant" is another very clever novel, and here again we are aware of the writer's aloofness from his characters, an aloofness touched with superiority, as if it were a novelist's rôle to be a more or less kindly satirist. On the whole, Mr. Walter Allen *is* kind, much kinder than Fate has been to Mrs. Forrester and the rest of them at Swithins. Henry Ashley, the "rogue elephant," divines that there is a skeleton in the cupboard, some shadow from the past that makes Mrs. Forrester treat her seventeen-year-old daughter, Audrey, as though she were still a little girl, to be scolded, and apologised for, and told nothing. Audrey's brother Alan, Henry's friend, her aunt, Roffey, and her cousin Sheila (with whom Henry is secretly having an *affaire*) all in their different ways "pick on" Audrey; it is a shame, thinks Henry, for arriviste and intriguer though he is, he is not devoid of kindly feelings. Pity for Audrey is one of the motives that prompt him to discover the nature of the Forresters' skeleton, but there is another, stronger and less creditable. The son of poor parents, he has made his way by brains and charm, in spite of the handicap of extreme physical ugliness; and he feels a deep-seated grudge, a class-conscious vengefulness, against these well-to-do people, his hosts, whose amiability is a form of patronage. By enlightening Audrey, elevating her to the status of a full-grown human being, he will also get even with them in his thoughts.

Mr. Allen skilfully makes the revelation depend upon and coincide with a garden-fête which is to mark Mrs. Forrester's return to the "world." The action of the book climbs steadily towards this peak, and when it is reached falls back, assuaged, into a semi-ironical anti-climax, with an unexpected twist—the biter, Henry, being bitten in a way that is specially wounding to his vigilant pride.

The Moral Issue. There is more than an echo of Aldous Huxley in Mr. Allen's technique, in his resolute insistence upon what is physically repulsive and in his general conception of the young buccaneer, the *cabotin* lavish with deceitful smiles and insincere words, who is its moving spirit. He does not follow Mr. Huxley in appending a moral, or rather, in writing a story that enforces a moral lesson; but he is not indifferent to the moral issue, and the cynical, equally with the non-cynical reader, will find food for thought in the way that good is made to come out of Henry's (predominately) evil-intentioned interference in the Forresters' affairs. Somehow, one feels, justice has been done: the good rewarded, the bad discomfited.

WALTER ALLEN'S "*Rogue Elephant," just published, is his first novel for six years; since "Blind Man's Ditch," which appeared before the war, he has done a good deal of B.B.C. work; and is a well-known book-reviewer in weekly papers.*

As to the characterisation, it is perhaps a little too dependent on the exigencies of Mr. Allen's theme; his people have to follow the lines laid down for them. But besides the rogue elephant himself there are several memorable portraits: Mrs. Forrester, whom one must respect but cannot like, is particularly well done. And there are many happy strokes of invention: Audrey's dream about her father; old Mr. Kinlet's fantasy centring on his friend Hobson, of which Henry Ashley makes such unscrupulous use; and Henry's conversation with the gardener, in which Henry shows himself at his blackest (perhaps too black, having regard to the general hue of his character). The lighter and the darker tones—for the book reaches down to tragedy and up to the sunny levels of social comedy—are cunningly mingled and contrasted, and the psycho-analytical element—for every serious novelist must pay his debt to Freud—is discreetly introduced, kept in its place. Altogether, "Rogue Elephant" is an unusually complete and satisfying novel.

Challenges to Credulity. More and more does the detective-story tend to explore the outer reaches of human behaviour. Crime is, of course, a world to itself; but even so, the situation described in "Death and the Pleasant Voices" gives from first to last an effect of almost complete unreality. That there are good things in it goes without saying. Miss Mary Fitt has written several memorable detective-stories; and the opening of this one weaves the old spell. The young man unconsciously impersonating another young man who is consciously impersonating the long-lost heir—how ingenious it all is! But soon everyone begins to behave in a manner so illogical and unpredictable as to seem quite motiveless. True, some of these anomalies are explained in the end, but chiefly by attributing to one of the characters a species of hypnotism which, though it might be paralleled in medical experience (a young doctor tells the story and doctors play a large part in it), is too far-fetched for the prosaic uses of a criminal investigation. Hitherto Miss Mary Fitt's stories have been "different"; it now seems as though she were trying to be different, and inventing a new psychology to justify the most freakish behaviour. To have one's powers of belief tested is all very well; but this book is one long challenge to credulity.

The same might be said of "Here Comes a Chopper." The heart of rural England is an evocative phrase. It may call up sunshine, green fields and browsing sheep, or mud, rain and complexes; but it takes Miss Gladys Mitchell to make the innocuous county of Surrey yield lanes that have no turning for nine miles and corpses that have no heads for many days. So many strange adventures befell Roger and Dorothy during their day's walking tour that Mrs. Bradley's cackle appears a symbol of normality in a mad world.

BOOKS REVIEWED.

House Under Mars. By Norah Hoult. (*Heinemann; 8s. 6d.*)
Rogue Elephant. By Walter Allen. (*Michael Joseph; 8s. 6d.*)
Death and the Pleasant Voices. By Mary Fitt. (*Michael Joseph; 8s. 6d.*)
Here Comes a Chopper. By Gladys Mitchell. (*Michael Joseph; 9s. 6d.*)

JOHN BURCH as Gerald in T. S. Eliot's "The Family Reunion," presented at the Mercury Theatre by the Mercury and Pilgrim Players in the second season of new plays by poets.

STARS OF SOME UP AND COMING PLAYS.

"Look at me, Harry: you can depend on me." Margaret Lang as Mary, and Alan Wheatley as Harry, Lord Monchensey, in "The Family Reunion," at the Mercury Theatre.

MARGARET RAWLINGS—in private life Lady Barlow and here seen with her daughter Jane—who is to return to the stage in Purcell's "Fairy Queen," due to open at Covent Garden on December 12 for one month's run.

CORAL BROWNE, who is to play the leading rôle in Somerset Maugham's "Lady Frederick," Firth Shephard's next production at the Savoy Theatre, due to open on November 21.

TALES WITH A STING

MIXED MANŒUVRES.*

By BRUCE WAUGH.

REAR-ADMIRAL PLUGGETT was reverting to peacetime practices with all the zeal of a newly-promoted flag officer, and the Ninth Cruiser Squadron was ostensibly taking the strain well.

A choppy sea was being goaded into angry waves by an increasing wind, and squalls of rain added to the discomfort of the crew of the cruiser *Topsides* as she sailed in company with the squadron. The day's exercise programme was long, and so also was the face of Lieut. Briggs, the Officer of the Watch.

His watch had so far consisted of anxiety, for which the bombastic outbursts of his liverish Captain had been mainly responsible. He stamped to warm his feet and took another bearing of the flagship. Then he heard the sound of ominous and heavy breathing coming closer as Captain Corn climbed up to the bridge.

" *Mister* Briggs," he said, in the slow, biting manner with which he opened his attacks, " what the devil do you think you 're up here for ? " When the Captain addressed his O.O.W. as " Mister " it was a certain sign that something exceedingly displeased him.

Lieut. Briggs couldn't in a moment think of a short answer that would be acceptable to his Captain, and, for safety, replied only, " Aye, aye, Sir."

Captain Corn's scowl grew as black as the storm-filled clouds, and his eyes glinted on his discomforted prey.

" Well, *Mister* Briggs ? " he insisted icily.

" To—er—steer the ship, Sir," Briggs ventured.

" Thunder balls ! " roared the Captain, and pounced round like a lion to the second Officer of the Watch.

" Well, *Mister* Small ? " he challenged.

" There are other duties, Sir," said Sub-Lieut. Small calmly, stroking his neat black beard affectionately.

" Then be good enough to tell Mister Briggs about them."

" Aye, aye, Sir," said Small, as if he were placating a tearful two-year-old.

The Captain waved his arm towards the foremast in one mighty sweep of indignation. " Every ship has repeated the flagship's signal except you ! " The Captain's voice boomed across the bridge and Lieut. Briggs winced from the blast.

" I can explain that, Sir," said the Yeoman of Signals.

" Silence ! " shouted the Captain. " Don't interrupt when I 'm speaking to the Officer of the Watch." Captain Corn stormed off the bridge, leaving a silence like the lull between broadsides from *Nelson's* 16-in. guns.

Lieut. Briggs looked at the Yeoman with sympathy.

" Well ? " he asked.

" We repeated the signal, Sir, but the hoist fouled and we had to haul down again."

" I see," said Briggs, and stared out at the ships steaming in line ahead. " What 's the flagship flying now ? " he asked, as he saw the flags fluttering from the distant halyards.

" Commence ' Officer of the Watch manœuvres,' Sir," replied the Yeoman.

" Oh, God," sighed Lieut. Briggs in dismay. " Tell the Captain," he ordered the Midshipman of the Watch. Then he turned to Sub-Lieut. Small. " He 'll leap up here like a rocket when he hears that," he said, smiling austerely, as if a complete grin would have been extravagance in the circumstances.

The Captain bustled the midshipman aside and hurried up to the compass platform. He revelled in manœuvres and prided himself on his " seaman's eye." He 'd show the Admiral there were seamen aboard his ship.

In the first manœuvre *Topsides* had to take station on the starboard beam of the flagship. Lieut. Briggs ordered an increase in speed and altered course, while Sub-Lieut. Small, using his distance meter, quietly called out the distances from the flagship.

The Captain was watching the manœuvre intently, and as *Topsides* was drawing up into station he saw his chance.

" Too late, Mister Briggs. You 're too late."

" I have reduced speed, Sir," said Briggs hopefully, but he saw that he was rapidly running ahead of station.

" Thunder and lightning ! " yelled Captain Corn. " Can't you see what 's going to happen ? A choir boy could do better than that ! "

When Lieut. Briggs had wriggled the ship back into approximate station, the Yeoman reported the flagship's next order.

" ' Emergency turn to port,' Sir," he called out.

The Captain moved over to the pelorus.

" I 'll take her," he said. Lieut. Briggs stood aside with relief to watch his Captain, who was eyeing the flagship as a boxer watches for the slightest move of his opponent.

The Captain had already put on port wheel when the Yeoman reported the executive signal and, measuring the flagship's course and distance with his unaided eye, kept the ship in perfect station throughout the turn.

The stern lines on the Captain's face relaxed a little as he handed the ship back to Lieut. Briggs. The second O.O.W. came closer to be able to whisper little bits of advice and comfort in his colleague's ear.

The next two manœuvres Briggs carried out without any alarming mismanagement or conspicuous success. The visibility was getting poor and it would obviously be impossible to continue the exercises much longer. Captain Corn was determined to leave a good impression on Rear-Admiral Pluggett.

" I 'll take her," he said, brusquely pushing Lieut. Briggs aside so that he could carry out the last manœuvre. As he got his ship expertly in position, the Admiral signalled the exercise completed. Captain Corn, seeing nothing to vex him at the moment, went down to his sea cabin and peace reigned on the bridge.

" Signal from the flagship, Sir," said the Yeoman in an unusually hesitant manner.

" Well, what is it ? " asked Lieut. Briggs.

" It says ' Manœuvre badly executed. Name the O.O.W.' " The Yeoman coughed discreetly and retired to a sheltered wing of the bridge where the wind and the fury of the Captain would be less keenly felt.

" Holy Moses ! " said Briggs, aghast. " I wonder how the 'ole boy will take that ? " he turned to ask Sub-Lieut. Small.

" It 'll shake him up a bit, I should say," said Small with relish, stroking his beard in anticipation. " Though I expect he 'll see that we get our share of it."

" Tell the Captain," Briggs ordered the midshipman, who was writing up the log with the aid of a much-chewed stub of pencil.

In less than half a minute Captain Corn was on the bridge, with a face that looked as if someone had spilled a kettle of boiling water over it and eyes that glared like those of a charging bull.

" What the hell 's all this about ? " he demanded of the bridge personnel collectively, who shrank back to make a gangway for him. " There was nothing wrong with that manœuvre," he added as if he were trying to let the Admiral hear.

" No, Sir," agreed Briggs. There was silence, until Briggs said nervously, " Er, what reply would you like me to make, Sir ? "

" There 's only one Officer of the Watch in this ship, Mister Briggs." The Captain stated the fact with a cold insistence.

Briggs looked his Captain in the face for a full half-minute. " But you had the ship for the last manœuvre, Sir," he had the courage to remind him.

" You don't expect me to give my name, do you ? " thundered the Captain.

" No, Sir," said Briggs truthfully.

The Captain started to pace furiously up and down the front of the compass platform to release some of his indignation.

" It 's intolerable ! " he muttered between clenched teeth.

" Signals are sometimes misread, Sir," said Sub-Lieut. Small suggestively, carefully keeping his eyes on the ship ahead.

Captain Corn stopped abruptly and stared with amazement at his second Officer of the Watch. Then a sudden gleam of decision came into his steel-cold eyes.

" We misread the signal," he announced, like a juror giving the verdict. " Yeoman," he called. " Make a reply to the flagship."

" Yes, Sir ? " said the Yeoman, with his pencil poised over the signal pad.

" Reply ' Thank you '," said Captain Corn, and left the bridge as abruptly as he had spoken.

Briggs looked at the second Officer of the Watch, who was smiling almost imperceptibly under his well-smoothed beard.

" It 's not only ships the old boy 's good at manœuvring," he said. " I wonder how the Admiral will interpret that ' Thank you ' ? "

Before Sub-Lieut. Small had time to make a reply the Yeoman approached the Officer of the Watch.

" Excuse me, Sir," he said. " That last signal, Sir. I think it referred to *your* last manœuvre. The flag-deck delayed in sending it up to the bridge."

" Have you sent the Captain's reply yet ? " Lieut. Briggs asked.

" Certainly, Sir," said the Yeoman, with professional pride.

" But why the devil didn't you tell the Captain this when he was discussing it with me ? "

The Yeoman's owl-like face creased into a restrained smile of cunning.

" I must never interrupt the Captain when he 's talking to the Officer of the Watch, Sir," he quoted, with exaggerated humility.

" Why, you old fox ! " said Lieut. Briggs with admiration. " When it comes to manœuvring, I don't think you 're much astern of station either."

THE END.

All the characters and incidents in this story are imaginary.

GROWING OLD BY GREASE-PAINT—MARGARET LOCKWOOD IN "HUNGRY HILL."

In the film version of "Hungry Hill" star Margaret Lockwood has her first experience of a film maturing. The celluloid years trace their path across her face and figure from eighteen to fifty; from Ireland to Monte Carlo. Two Cities Films are making Daphne du Maurier's story of the two Irish families—Brodericks and Donovans, whose feud, based on a copper-mine sunk in the foot of Hungry Hill, is the source of most of the trouble in Fanny Rosa's life.

Fanny Rosa at eighteen. A lovely girl in a dress of real Limerick lace, net, frilling; blue organdie bows over a blue satin base, she made young Broderick's heart miss a beat. "Hungry Hill" covers a period of nearly forty years in Queen Victoria's reign. Fanny Rosa—Margaret Lockwood; the dressmaker—Eleanor Abbey, who designed all the dresses.

Slowly Fanny Rosa ages; the powder goes—is removed with a brush by Toni Sforzini, expert make-up man.

The wrinkles arrive as she nears fifty—on the forehead, by the nose, between the eyes.

Thirty years on. Hair has been whitened by expert—Vienne Walker; a false fringe added; a little Victorian hat perched upon her head; she is nearly ready for "shooting."

Johnnie inherits the Irish castle; wants to run it his way; his mother must go. She leaves for the South of France to gamble. Johnnie Broderick—Dermot Walsh.

CITY NOTES.

FINANCE IN A FIRST-CLASS CARRIAGE.

"OH, yes, thanks; I was home by eleven: fast asleep before midnight. Capital idea of yours, Brokie. Nicely balanced, that dinner."

"Quite a pleasant evening," agreed the Banker. "Excellent way of starting up again. Seven years. Is it really?"

"How *The Sketch* has managed to survive without us," the Jobber wondered, "is beyond my limited power of comprehension. Still, there you are."

"And here are we," observed the Solicitor. "Tell me, please, what I ought to do with a deceased account that contains seventy-two different lots of stocks and shares."

"Mixed bag?"

"Very mixed. From Consols to Kaffirs: with industrials and West African mines thrown in."

"Any Home Rails?"

"A few; mostly the junior stocks. Southern deferred, and that kind of thing. If the stocks are sold, the money has to be re-invested in Trustee securities."

"That will make a big difference to the income. What do the beneficiaries say?"

"They leave the whole matter in my hands, confound it. I wish to goodness they 'd settle it for themselves."

"Shouldn't care to have the responsibility of deciding," the Broker remarked. "But come down to brass tacks."

"I 'm asking you to," said the Solicitor. "How about these Home Rails, for example? What is the Government going to do about nationalisation?" He turned to the City Editor, who frankly confessed that he knew no more than the next man as to what will happen.

"I 'd rather be a bull," he continued, "than a bear, all the same. Seems to me we shall see the prices better before the next dividend season comes along."

"When 's that?"

"February 'Forty-seven," said the City Editor. "Home Rails ought to stand higher by then. Look at the yields they give you."

"I thought the public wouldn't buy Home Railway stocks," put in the Engineer. "They 've been out of favour for years, surely. Do you find your clients have any faith in them?"

"I 'm afraid our clients mostly have more cash than confidence in Home Rails," the Broker replied. "Still, it may be just as well," he told the Solicitor, "to keep your deceased account's stocks for a bit. What industrials have you got?"

"Mostly good stuff; what you 'd call blue chips, I suppose. Half a minute: I have the list in my pocket. Here you are. You shall see for yourself."

"Imperial Tobacco, Courtaulds, Dunlops, William Cory, P. & O. Deferred, Distillers, Lyons, Thomas Tilling, etcetera, etcetera. What a list! Sort of things you might well buy for an elderly maiden aunt from whom you have expectations."

"Very humdrum shares to suggest for to-day's investor," objected the Jobber.

"The weight of money will carry the prices higher," the City Editor platitudinised.

"The weight of money, or the wait for money? You might get either, you know."

The Banker assumed that the Government had the money market so completely under control that they could maintain without difficulty their cheap-money policy.

"Not," he went on, "that it prevents an occasional shock to Stock Exchange markets, such as we saw last month, when Shinwell rocked the boat with his gay chatter about a coming coal crisis."

"Which," said the Engineer, "he modified later on to an extent that made us all want to buy iron, coal and steel shares. I was rash enough to help myself to a few Hilton Main Collieries."

"For any particular reason?" inquired the Broker. "I 'm asking for information: not just because you didn't give me the order."

The Engineer laughed at him. "My order was too small to bother a big firm like yours with. I heard that the dividend was likely to be a good one. That 's why I stepped in."

"Ocean Coal I 'm told to buy," said the Broker. "Oh, yes: the price has come up lately, but my man professed to know what he was talking about, and I think he did."

"Inside information can turn out to be very expensive at times," the Jobber reminded them. "And there 's nothing more misleading than facts; except figures, of course."

The Banker did not agree. "Your statement is too sweeping," he contended. "The cheap-money craze will put British banks' shares on a yield basis of Three per cent.——"

"You don't get much more out of them than that at to-day's prices."

"That 's true, and it looks hopelessly wrong to buy the shares now. All the same, the prices are likely, in my humble opinion, to go even higher."

The City Editor said that you might apply similar arguments to insurance shares. "And think of the way their prices have been run up in the last few weeks! Precious poor yield you get on them nowadays."

"Insurance shares do stand a chance of getting increases in dividends. The good companies are in a wonderfully strong financial position, and their business must have expanded considerably since the end of the war."

"They have the same kind of trouble as we smaller folks do in the way of finding shares that give a decent yield."

"My sneaking fancy is for the Oil Market——" the Jobber began.

"But I thought you dealt in Kaffir shares?"

"So I do, but it seems to me that speculation is a bit tired of Kaffirs."

"Rooderands are Kaffirs, and you put me into those," the Engineer observed. "Have you changed your views?"

"Not a bit. You will come home there all right if you can exercise a spot of patience. But I 've just told you that speculation is a bit tired of our market."

"And you think that speculation will switch over to oil shares?"

"That 's my idea. Some people will always want to speculate, and, as you know, the Stock Exchange is going back to fortnightly settlements very soon."

"And that will lead to a public demand for oil shares?"

"Well, to anything that offers the chance of a run for your money, and may give you ten or twenty pounds to spend on a small turkey for Christmas."

"We shall see the Cape coming for West Wits. and Anglo-American Corporation and East Rand Consols and St. Helena and——"

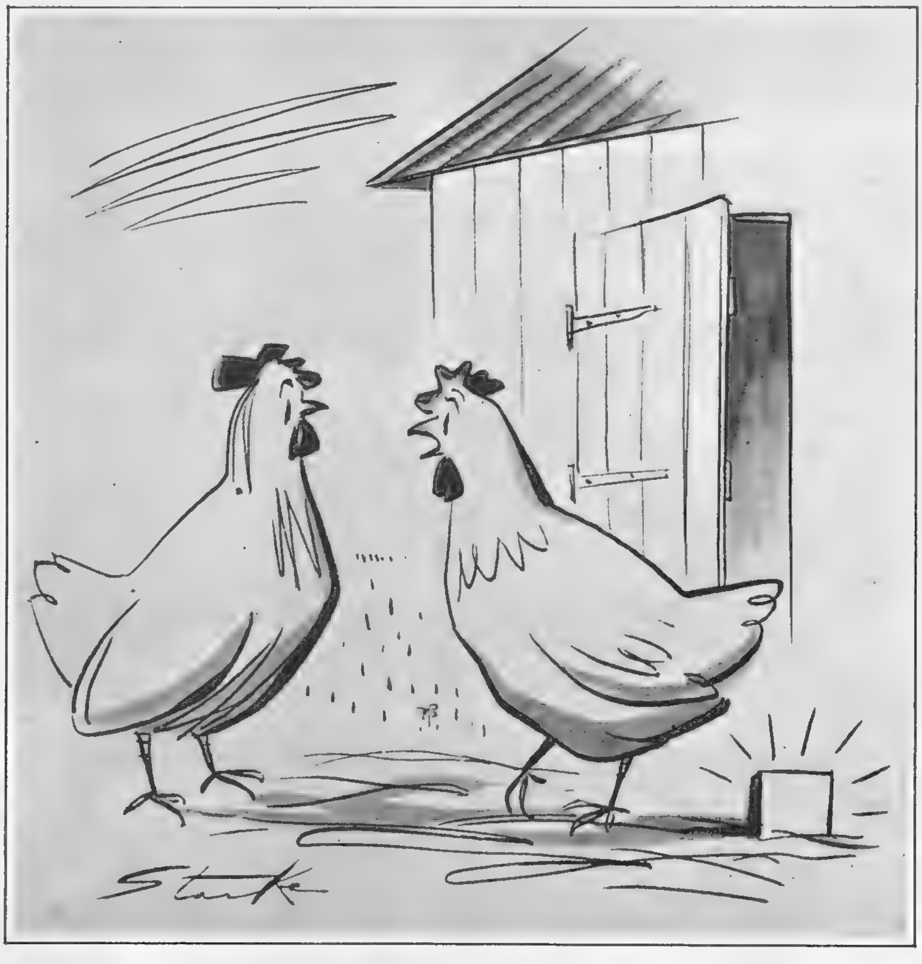
"Why not say the whole collection, my boy? If one thing goes ahead, the others are fairly sure to follow."

"The bull point for the Kaffir Market," declared the City Editor, "is the fact that millions of pounds will be wanted to open up the developing mines. And unless the market is a good one, the public are not going to put up the cash."

The Jobber nodded assent. "That 's perfectly obvious," he agreed; "but there will be some quiet patches, and we 're in one of them now. What 's your trouble?" he turned to ask the Solicitor.

The Solicitor heaved a pathetic sigh. "Here we are practically in the station, and instead of telling me what to sell, you have only talked about buying. 'Next time,' you say? Right you are." He opened the carriage door. "Well, I must grin and bear the suspense."

"That," concluded the Jobber, "is the only thing you are supposed to be allowed to bear in the Stock Exchange. The Government make us a bull of it, and the Stock Exchange Council permits us to bear it. Funny little world, isn't it? All change here, gentlemen!"



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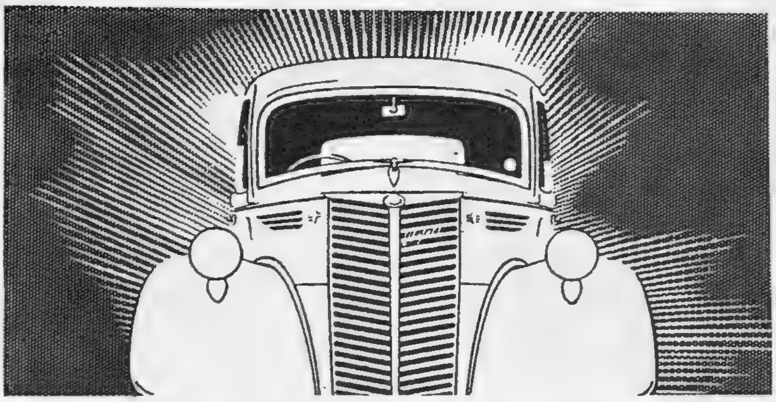

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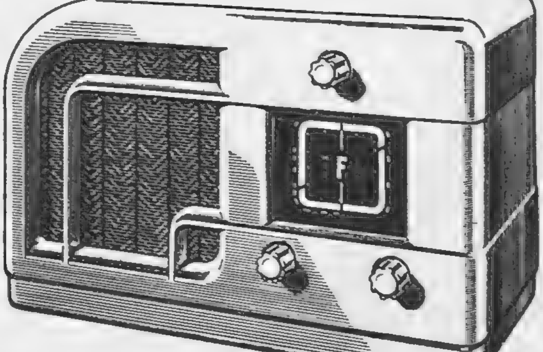

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Peter Clark.

NET IN THE NEWS

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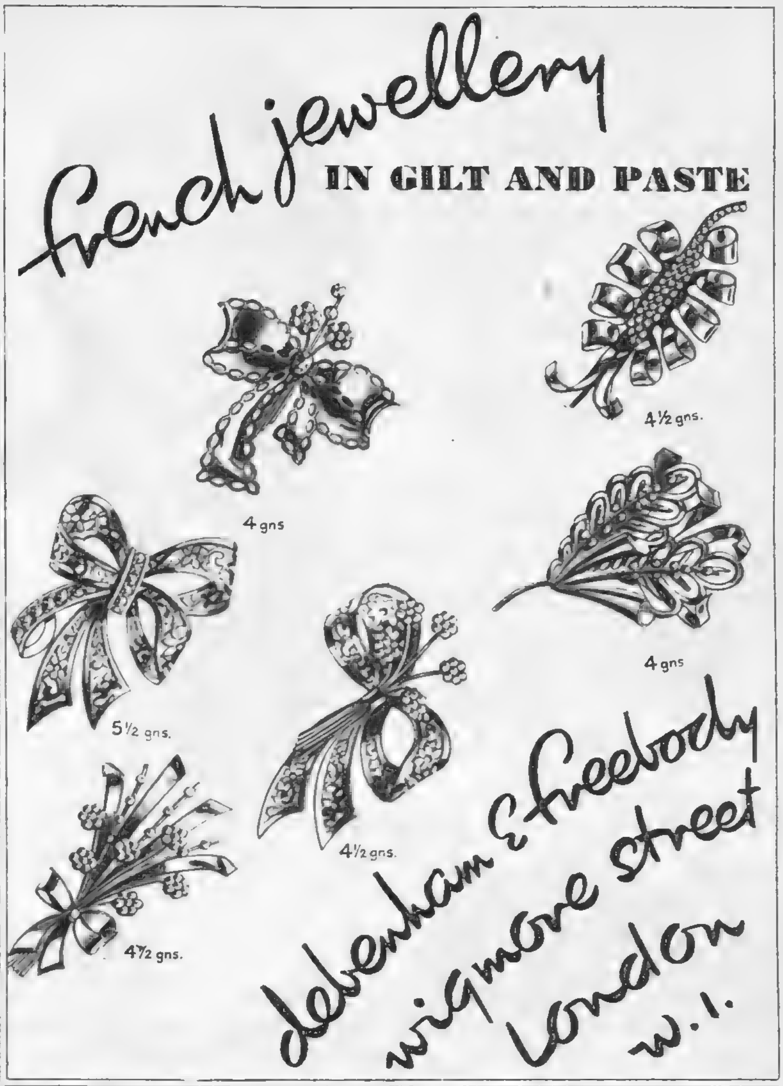
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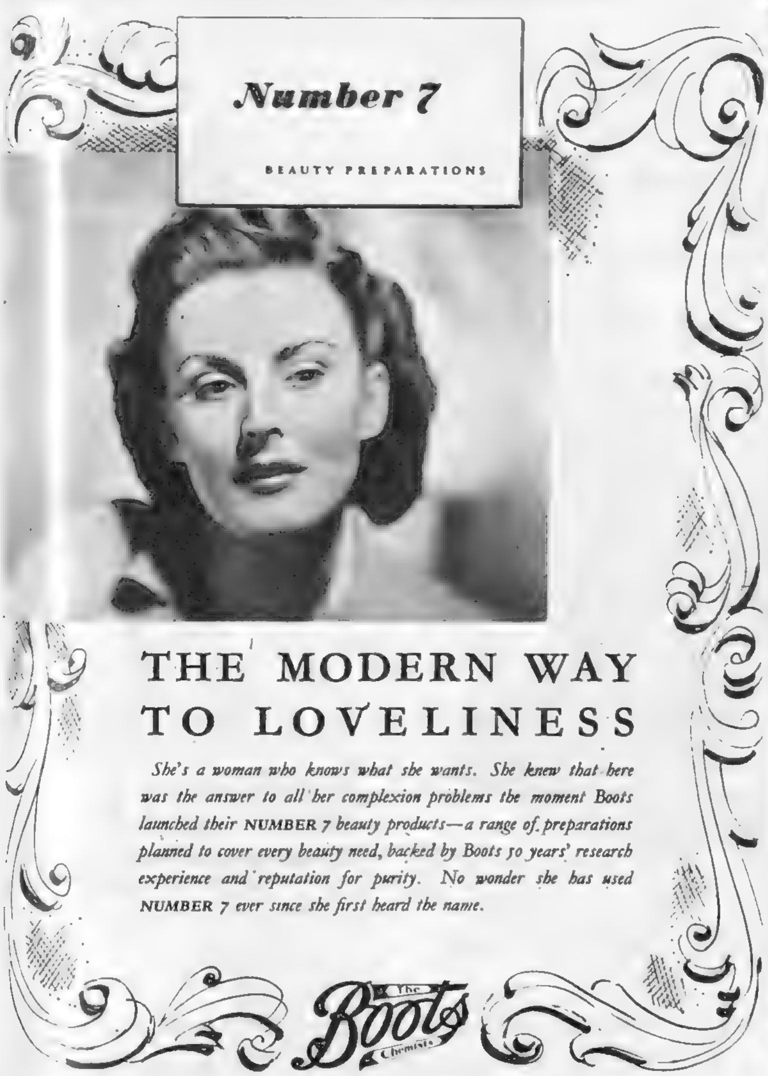
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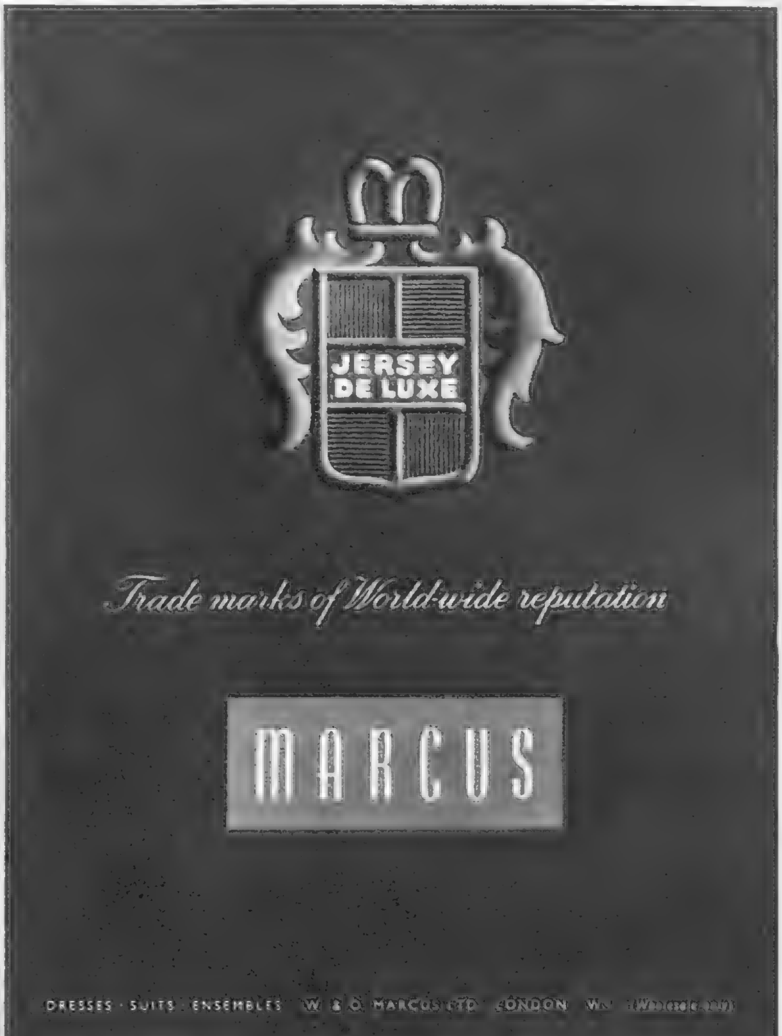
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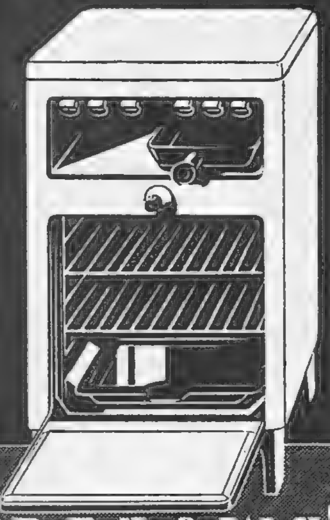

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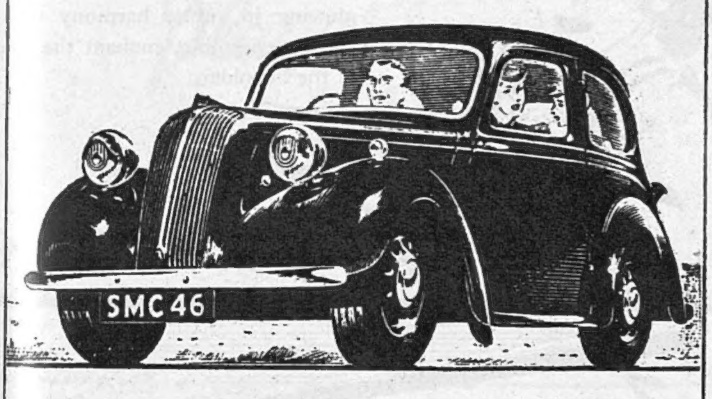

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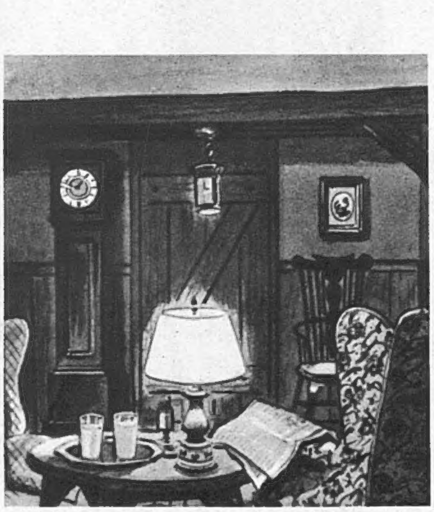

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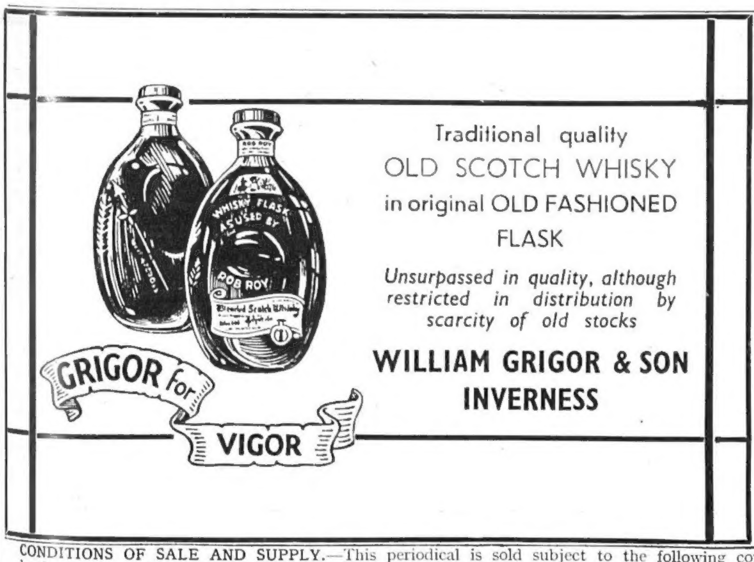

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PRINTED IN ENGLAND by THE ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS AND SKETCH, LTD., Milford Lane, London, W.C.2, and Published Fortnightly at the Office, Commonwealth House, 1, New Oxford Street, London, W.C.1. WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 1946. Re-entered as Second-Class Matter, August 15, 1941, at the Post Office at New York (N.Y.), under the Act of March 3, 1879.